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F-4 DISASTER AND EDISON'S NEW STORAGE BATTERY ARE DISCUSSED

Some Critics Hold Invention Will Guard Against Explosion

Thomas A. Edison's new submarine storage battery may make impossible the accident which some naval critics think caused the F-4 disaster—an explosion after the ignition of hydrogen and oxygen gas generated by lead batteries. Other critics say the Edison invention is not a particularly new one.

Mr. Edison himself wishes to reserve decision until after a conclusive test in actual under-sea service.

The New York World of August 30, publishes the following news about the Edison battery:

"That Thomas A. Edison has requested decision reserved on his submarine storage battery until its worth is proved in the E-2 was made known yesterday at his laboratory in West Orange, N. J. The battery has been tested sharply at the Brooklyn Navy Yard for 13 months, but Mr. Edison wishes a conclusive showing in actual under-sea service.

The history of the invention was told yesterday. In 1910, Messrs. McNaughton, Ellyson, Warren and Miles visited Mr. Edison at his laboratory and asked him to concentrate his efforts on the invention of a storage battery containing chemicals that would not attack fastenings in submarines, and which, when reached by salt water, would not generate chlorine gas or any other dangerous fumes. The officers said our navy had been handicapped because the submarines using lead batteries had to lay up once a year to have the batteries overhauled.

For four years Mr. Edison experimented.

"With the Edison battery, it is said, our submarines not only will have the distinct advantage of being free from chlorine gas, but as the battery is lighter, smaller and of greater capacity the undersea cruising power of the boats will be increased. It is said the strategic value of the submarines will be increased 40 per cent.

May Dive More Abruptly.

Furthermore, it is asserted, because of the nature of the construction of the battery, submarines may dive at an angle of 60 degrees, whereas formerly the sharpest permissible angle was 15 degrees.

Not satisfied with the tests at his laboratory, Mr. Edison insisted on having his battery taken to the Brooklyn Navy Yard early in July, 1914, and subjected to the hardest tests naval experts could devise. The battery was put on a pitching platform and charged

and recharged 550 times, while the platform was in motion. This was to determine whether the battery would stand up in use in a submarine traveling in a continuous seaway. It did, triumphantly. The test to which the battery was subjected, it is figured, was equivalent to 10 years' service in a submarine, which is charged only about once a week.

"It was alleged before a Congressional committee last December that much of the so-called unpreparedness of our submarines was due to lead battery troubles. Following these statements Secretary Daniels ordered Edison batteries installed in the L-3, the largest submarine ever designed for our navy.

"This was followed by an order to equip the E-2 with Edison batteries. When that craft was making a submerged run off Newport last September, the presence of chlorine gas was detected and before the boat could reach the surface the men inhaled much gas. Commander Gilliam is now at the government sanitarium at Las Animas, Colo., so severely were his lungs affected.

Acid Holes Let in Water.

"It was found that sulphuric acid from the batteries in the boat had eaten a hole through the main ballast tank plates that surround the battery compartment. When under pressure in diving the plates were strained and salt water was admitted to the battery tank. Coming in contact with the sulphuric acid the water produced chlorine gas.

"When told that naval officers at the Brooklyn Navy Yard had been satisfied with the 13-month test of his battery, Mr. Edison said:

"Of course, that is good news, but let no judgment be passed until the battery has been actually used in a submarine."

The Case of the F-4.

"Some persons believe that an investigation into the cause of the disaster to the F-4 in Honolulu harbor will show that an explosion occurred after the ignition of hydrogen and oxygen gas generated by lead batteries. Makers of lead batteries resent the assertion that the Edison battery is a new invention. They say it is an adaptation of the old Edison storage battery, differing only in size. They assert further, that the Edison battery is as likely to permit the presence of chlorine gas as a lead type battery is; that the generation of the gas is due to electrolysis caused by the contact of salt water with the wire conveying the current from the battery and therefore the type of battery has no bearing on the presence of chlorine."

NEED SIX MONTHS TO GET FIRST LINE OF U. S. NAVY INTO SHAPE

Such is Opinion of Anonymous Expert in Columns of the Chicago Tribune

The Chicago Tribune recently published the following:

WASHINGTON, D. C.—In view of the threatening aspect of the dispute with Germany, the Tribune has obtained the following statement of our military preparedness from an expert whose name cannot be revealed.

The first line of the navy could be put in fighting shape in from three to four months by concentrating upon its endurance energy. The crews could be filled up among recently retired sailors and by drafting men from the vessels of secondary importance. The state of discipline in the navy, never as high as the best European navies, has considerably deteriorated under the influence of Secretary Daniels, and would need fully this time to bring it up to battle condition.

Target Practice Below Par.

The target practice is also far below the efficiency of the English and Germans before the start of war, and its efficiency has been decreasing while that of the English and Germans has been bettered during the months of tension.

To man the rest of the ships of the navy and to drill the crews and to put them in battle condition would take at least one, more likely two years, and then the lack of scout boats, adequate submarines and supply vessels would prevent the fleet from being effective as a unit. The fleet that could be hoped for it would be that it might work as a part of the allied navies, its deficiencies being supplemented by the other countries.

The ammunition supply could not possibly be provided in this country, but could probably be purchased from England or France.

Have Nucleus for Army.

As to the army, of course we have no army. We have the makings of an army, and if they were utilized to the best possible efficiency we could have a presentable force capable of operating in defense of New England and New York in from six to 12 months.

The first step would be to recall to America all the troops in the Philippines, Hawaii, the canal zone, Cuba, Alaska and Porto Rico, who would be of no use there, and in case of naval catastrophe would fall certain prey to the enemy. Their places should be taken by national guard regiments mustered under the colors. Not the

best national guard troops should be used for this purpose, but those somewhat lacking in discipline, because it is easier to discipline volunteer troops in foreign service than at home.

The best national guard regiments should be mustered in the present condition and as many regular officers as can be spared should be distributed among them.

The regular army should be expanded by making every battalion the core of a regiment, adding to it two battalions of new troops. Officers would be found by promoting existing officers, by promoting competent regular soldiers, and by selections from private life.

The field artillery would be used in the same method as the infantry and cavalry to expand into greater numbers of field batteries.

Practice With Coast Guns.

For heavy field artillery, of which we have none in the United States, we would take our coast artillery men, who are accustomed to the handling and firing of heavy guns. These would continue training with their guns, and would practice maneuvering duties while heavy field guns were being constructed, so that when these guns were ready there would be gun crews prepared to use them.

After three months' preliminary training in camps the assembling of the field force would begin by concentrating such troops as were sufficiently instructed to act as soldiers. To this field army the garrisons in the outlying parts would have a right to come by showing greater efficiency than some of the new units at home, which would be sent out to take their places. The field army delivered in size, it would give the general officers an opportunity to practice maneuvers, an opportunity which American generals never have had. In this way, inefficient general officers could be weeded out before they brought a catastrophe upon their troops.

Good Army in Six Months.

At the end of six months, if politics had not interfered, there would be an army capable of acting on the defense in the United States. In the succeeding months its efficiency would increase rapidly and at the end of a year, if thoughtfully and carefully maintained, this army would be in shape for action over seas. During this training both officers and soldiers who were found physically unfit for active duty would be mustered into a reserve training corps and would set to work training the reserves to fill up the front line and eventually become first line troops themselves.

Two great efforts would have to be made: to get good officers and to get rid of bad officers.

Mistake Known Too Late.

Untrained troops are frequently anxious to retain inefficient officers as are inefficient officers to hold their jobs, and neither men nor officers ap-

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precipitate their mistake until confronted with the necessity of going into action when it is too late to remedy the error.

The question of equipment, other than heavy field artillery, would not be serious. The supply of rifles on hand and the capacity of the government arsenals would supply all needs in this direction for the first year of war, and as no field artillery other than that needed for target practice would be used, the accumulation of an adequate supply would be a simple matter.

There would be the usual trouble with inventions in that foolish plans would be pressed by influential backers and official recommendations would be resented by noisy outcry, but these and many other disagreeable, not to say horrible things are unavoidable if this country goes to war.

VALUE OF LINERS IS ALMOST DOUBLED BY TONNAGE SCARCITY

LIVERPOOL, Eng.—The upward trend of steamship values is well maintained especially for tonnage suitable for liner service, the dearth of such boats becoming more and more marked. The absorption of all available labor into naval shipbuilding and munition work here as well as in France, Russia and Italy, has been complete and shipbuilders are unable to accept orders for new tonnage with any prospect of making delivery so that sellers can get almost any price they ask for available boats. The North German steamer Schlesien, which sold at auction in January for 53,000 pounds, has just been sold for over 100,000 pounds.

JACK FROST IS ALREADY NIPPING ITALIAN FORCE

ROME.—Even at this season of the year there are many of the Italian soldiers suffering from frost bites and the gangrene which follows. These cases are among the men serving as outposts on mountain summits, some of them 12,000 feet above sea level, where they stand practically motionless for hours at a time. The danger of freezing will increase with the approaching winter, and appeals have been made to all classes, besides factories, to hasten the preparation of warmer garments of every description for these exposed sentries. By private initiative 5000 warm garments are being made daily.

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ANNOUNCEMENT.

I wish to notify the public that I am no longer connected with Oahu College, but have opened a studio at 251 Vineyard street, rear cottage, where I will receive beginners as well as advanced pupils on violin. I also wish to state that I will start orchestra rehearsals the first Tuesday in October, to which all players (ladies and gentlemen) are invited to join by paying a monthly fee of \$1.

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